(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (c) As a part of existing Confidence Building Measures, military-to-military level exchanges have been taking place between India and China. Such exchanges are in the nature of goodwill visits and no formal discussions to resolve outstanding issues between the two countries are held during such visits. However, such visits have promoted friendly contacts between the armed forces of the two sides and have contributed to the improvement of bilateral relations between the two countries and also maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the India-China border.

2. The Joint Working Groups/Expert Groups of the two countries hold regular discussions through diplomatic channels to resolve outstanding issues.

Accident at Varsova, Mumbai

3393. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to negligence of "Coastal Protection Force" three small children have lost their lives at Varsova, Mumbai;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Coastal protection Force helicopter took long time to come for rescue inspite of repeated request from their relatives; and

(c) what steps Government are going to take to protect people from such incidences?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) and (b) On 6th June, 2001 at about 1830 hrs Police Control Room, Varsova informed Coast Guard Regional headquarters (West), Mumbai about the incident. At 1855 a Coast Guard Chetak helicopter took off. This helicopter, on reaching the Varsova beach, carried out extensive search in the area. In the meantime, the Police Control Room, Varsova informed Coast guard headquarters (West) that the bodies of the missing boys have been recovered and therefore search by helicopter may be terminated. The Coast Guard helicopter thereafter, terminated the search.

(c) The solution to this problem lies in positioning of lifeguards and adequate safety measures at these beaches, which is the responsibility of the local administration. Coast guard would continue its endeavours to attend to the rescue calls promptly.